

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mailing Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2006
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**IMPROVING ACCESS TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS
Treatment Fair Offers Networking and Community Resource Education**

Waukesha, WIS. – The State of Wisconsin’s Public Defender Trial Office in Waukesha will host an Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) Treatment Fair in partnership with the Waukesha County Criminal Justice Collaborating Council (CJCC) on Thursday, February 9, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., in the County Courthouse Commons Area.

To kick-off the event, County Executive Dan Vrakas will provide opening remarks in the Jury Assembly Room (CG-6), which is west of the Commons Area.

“It is truly an honor to be a member of the CJCC and to speak at the AODA treatment fair,” said Vrakas. “By working cooperatively to provide education and information to our greater community about substance abuse treatments, we are one step closer to reducing recidivism, which is costly for the offender and the public and private sector agencies that help them change behaviors. Our residents should be proud of our innovative and tireless commitment to addressing these societal concerns.”

Immediately following Vrakas’ remarks, there will be an orientation on the new alcohol treatment court that will be facilitated by the CJCC and is scheduled to start hearing cases later this winter. Established through a \$450,000 federal grant, it is the first treatment court in Wisconsin to focus solely on alcohol-based offenses.

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“Improving Access to Substance Abuse Programs,” *continued...*

District Attorney Paul Bucher stated, "While Waukesha County has done a very good job in dealing with drug and alcohol abuse as it impacts the safety of the community, it is clear we must continue to move forward with innovative ideas. Doing things the same old way, but at the same time demanding different results simply, is not an efficient way to do business. We need to be tough on the offender, yet look long term for other solutions. That includes treatment in addition to punishment. It is all about being smarter with our resources. I am hopeful the new approach we are taking with the impaired driver will make our community safer".

From 12 – 1:30 p.m., AODA treatment providers will participate in a display area to share information about the important programs and services that they provide for substance abusers. It is a great opportunity to network with treatment professionals and to learn about treatment resources in the county.

“This fair is a unique opportunity for everyone involved in the criminal justice system to gain insight into how the many treatment providers work in our community to combat drug and alcohol dependency,” said Chief Judge Kathryn Foster (Circuit Court XII).

First Assistant Public Defender Sam Benedict said, “Evidence shows that keeping people involved in substance abuse treatment and court supervision is a winning combination. By coordinating the treatment fair, we help promote existing treatment resources locally that can assist us in changing addictive behaviors.”

The Courthouse is located at 515 W. Moreland Blvd., in Waukesha. The Commons Area is on the Ground Floor.

The fair, which has been designed to target members of the treatment community, attorneys, and court officials, is open to the public. Attendees do not need reservations.

For more information, please contact Sam Benedict in the Public Defender’s Office at (262) 521-5173 or Michelle Cyrulik of the CJCC at (262) 548-7925.

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